



THE Chinquapin

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SPRING 2006

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

That night at dinner it was all I could talk about. My father told me that he caught them when he was a boy; he seemed to know everything about them. After dinner he looked at me and asked if I would like to catch one. "Yes, of course" was my answer. We went into the woods at Campbell and Gardenia, only a few blocks from my home. I can still clearly see the small pond in a clearing in the woods. It was maybe 40 by 20 feet, had a large fallen tree across it and the water was shallow and clear. Looking down into the water after a few minutes, I noticed a little inch long crawfish. I was shown how to make them scoot backwards into my hand and within a few minutes I had caught one. For the next few years, I spent lots of time there catching toads, frogs, pollywogs, crawfish, dragonfly larva and all kinds of small water creatures. That was fifty years ago and I have never lost the wonder of catching and learning about what lives in ponds, streams and lakes. In those same fifty years, Royal Oak has grown; the many wild, undeveloped corners of the city are gone. Now the vernal ponds that once dotted the city are the rarest wildlife habitats we have. Little boys no longer have the chance to capture



Thirty years of tree growth turns a once sunny pond into a hidden forest pond. The Tenhave Vernal Pond photographed in July 2005.

Tenhave Vernal Pond Project of 2005

BY BOB MULLER

When I was in second grade, a boy brought a crawfish to school for show and tell. I was captivated. I had never seen an animal like this before. Crabs living here in Royal Oak, amazing!

the wonder of toads, frogs, crawfish and dragonflies in Royal Oak, but maybe we have changed that.

During a chance meeting over a year ago at the Royal Oak Farmers Market with Jim Domanski, co-owner of Pronto! Jim asked, "When are you going to restore the pond in Tenhave Woods?" The Royal Oak Nature Society, from our founding, had always planned on restoring the pond. On many nature walks, I have pointed out the old pond and talked

about what it was like in the 1970's and the life that filled it. Back then it was a sunny pond, but thirty years of the tree growth slowly turned it into a forest pond. Wooded vernal ponds with their lack of green plants and heavy load of leaves trying to decompose, have little dissolved oxygen. This is what had happened to Tenhave's pond. The pond used to have lots of aquatic life, but now all the animals that breathe with gills are gone. What we had was a

perfect mosquito-breeding pond and all the animals that eat them were no longer there. Jim's question started things in motion. We could wait forever for a grant, or just build the pond now!

During the last four years we had done a great deal of research on the pond. Dr. Kevin Zipple, the former director of the National Amphibian Conservation Center at the Detroit Zoo, had conducted water quality studies and commented that both parks were great amphibian habitat, but we had almost no amphibians. The Clinton River Watershed Council along with the North American Native Fishes Association's Michigan Chapter helped us with macro invertebrate surveys. Macro invertebrates are used to determine water quality. Edi Sonntag, a PhD candidate studying Blanchard Cricket Frogs, also has helped with water tests and discussions on what was wrong and what we might be able to do about it. Lots of data and time had gone into what we should do to bring the pond back to what it once was. The best answer was to remove the trees and let the sun back in. Along with this we needed to clear the brush along the fence to let the wind back in and to remove some of the

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On August 8, volunteers removed small trees and brush.



By October 14, the area had been cleared and was ready for the excavator.

sediment that had filled the pond up in the last few decades. The wind creates ripples that increase the surface area and thus increases the ability of the water to absorb oxygen.

To get the money we needed for the restoration of Tenhave Woods' vernal pond, the Nature Society board decided that we should have fundraisers. As it turned out, we were a complete failure at that, as we never had any. The Board did vote to earmark the profit from parking cars in Gunn Dyer Park during the Dream Cruise for the pond project. That would help for incidentals, but would not be enough for the whole project. Board members started to look for tree removal and excavation companies that would donate services. Luck was with us as we soon found Rick Cassidy of Mountain Top Tree Service (Northville) willing to cut the large trees for us. Perry Gentner of Machine Works, an excavating company owned by a former Royal Oak resident, would do our excavating for only the cost of his fuel. Button's Rent-It

also helped with a deal on a stump grinder. We also began to look for volunteers; there would be plenty of work for them to do. At that point, we were off and



The excavator started on October 21

running!
August 8, 2005, we started with eight volunteers working on removing small trees and brush. The removed trees and brush were stacked outside of the pond area. Later, the brush piles would be moved to other parts of the nature area to form wildlife habitats and the downed trees would be used to line trails. We worked for several days getting the area clear enough for the tree service to get in with their equipment. Mountain Top was only going to drop the trees; it

was our job to cut them up and move them out of the pond area. They dropped about 15 large trees into one big pile. I never thought we would be able to move that

Department also hauled out some large logs that we could not handle and chipped the excess treetops we could not use. By October 3rd, we had the area clear except for grinding the stumps in the area where the excavator would be working. Three of us ground twelve tree stumps in one evening. I hurt for days. Now we were ready for the excavator.

This was the labor side of the project, but there was another side. The Royal Oak Republican Women's Club had signed on to handle the opening ceremonies and getting us publicity. They contacted newspapers, radio and television stations. The result was articles and photos in the Daily Tribune, Royal Oak Review, Royal Oak Mirror and the Detroit News. Several of these papers also ran one or more follow-up articles. We also had the Royal Oak City television station WROK film parts of our project. With all we were doing with the labor, we never would have had the time to set up for the dedication. The result was 135 people showing up for

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Spring Speaker Programs

March 1st: The Michigan Nature Association (MNA) was founded in 1952 in southeast Michigan by a group of nature lovers. Over fifty years later, the state's oldest land preservation group continues protecting natural areas across the state, while continuing our commitment to southeast Michigan. Jeremy Emmi, Executive Director, Michigan Nature Association, will discuss MNA's mission and show many of the unique natural areas and rare species preserved in southeast Michigan and other areas of the state.

April 5th: We live in the world's largest temperate freshwater environment, but fishes remain our hidden wildlife. Few nature lovers seem to ever notice them. Dr. Gerald Smith's, Curator Emeritus of Fishes U of M Museum of Zoology, talk will provide you with a new appreciation of these fantastic animals. The Great Lakes fish fauna consists of nearly 200 cold and warm water species. It is certain that they all entered the basin within the past 14,000 years and fossil evidence shows that even the warm water species came here more than 12,000 years ago. Figuring out how the warm water species gained access to the basin has been a problem, since lake outflows consisted of glacial meltwater - too cold for most sunfish,

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ALL SPEAKER PROGRAMS AND NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE. PRE-REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED.

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. - Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

Date	Program
March 1st	<i>Preserving Southeast Michigan for Over Half a Century</i>
April 5th	<i>Fishes of the Great Lakes and How They Got Here</i>
May 3rd	<i>Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park</i>
June 7th	<i>A Trip to the Galapagos Islands</i>

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location
March 11th	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 22nd	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 30th	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 6th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 20th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummington Park
May 20th	Saturday	11:30 a.m.	Tenhave Woods

Nature Walk Descriptions

Wearing boots while in the parks is recommended during the wet springtime.

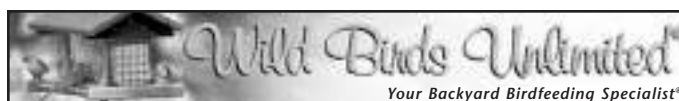
March 11th: *Winter Tree Identification* - we will take a look at the trees of Tenhave when they are not hidden by the leaves. This will also be a great time to look for our winter birds.

April 22nd: *Early Spring Wildflowers* - spring beauty, trout lily, bloodroot, & spicebush and more

April 30th: *Spring Wildflowers* - Trillium, blue & yellow violets, spring beauty, wild geranium, jack-in-the-pulpit, spice bush, & wood anemone and more.

May 6th: *Spring Wildflowers* - Wild geranium, foamflower, jack-in-the-pulpit, trillium, & wood poppy and more.

May 20th: *Pond Study* - We will be sampling the vernal ponds for what lives in them. We will have aquariums for viewing what we find. If you like we will have small aquarium nets and we will identify what you catch or just come and view what we catch. For anyone interested we will go over to Tenhave woods at 11:30 and see what we can find in the re-stored pond there.



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Royal Oak, MI 48067
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Phone: 248-548-2424
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Email: wburoyaloak@aol.com



Dogs are not allowed inside either Tenhave Woods or Cummington Park.

catfish and minnows - until about 10,000 years ago. This discussion will suggest a resolution to this problem and also comment on the causes of modern day extinctions of fishes in the basin.

May 3rd: Bob Muller, Royal Oak Nature Society Naturalist, will take a look at both of our nature parks past and present plus what have we seen, what is changing, what are we doing and what are we planning.

June 7th: Rodger Bajorek, retired naturalist from Stony Creek Metro Park, talked to our group several years ago about Whitetail deer. Now he is back with a talk on his trip to the Galapagos Islands. This is where Darwin began to formulate his views on the origin of species. The isolated islands of the Galapagos have fascinating wildlife that has radiated outward from the few land animals to reach its shores.

New: Owl Hoots in March!

For *Tenhave Woods*, meet at **8 pm** in the parking lot on Lexington & Marais and for *Cummingston Park*, meet at **8 pm** at the entrance at Leafdale & Torquay. We will attempt to lure in or have the Screech & Great Horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

- Mar 8** Tenhave Woods
- Mar 16** Cummingston
- Mar 23** Tenhave Woods



On October 21, the crowd listened to Bob Muller (at right) during the dedication ceremony.

the grand opening on October 21, 2005. They spent time in the pond area and woods and I am sure that there has never been a group this large in the park before. Several people joined the Nature Society that night and one young man came with his parents to release his pet American Toad, Flash. What a great name for a toad!

The excavator had started on Friday, October 21, but Saturday, the 22nd was the big workday. Along with a full day of excavating, we had both Boy Scout Troops back and they worked all day. Brush piles were made, trails were lined with logs, brush along the fence was cleared and structure was placed back on the pond floor. "Structure" is rocks, logs and branches used as hiding places and breeding grounds for the pond life that will hopefully begin to return next spring.

In the weeks that followed, more structure was replaced and we had some help with this from Den 4 of Cub Scout Pack 1627. Dena Serrato put together a team of people to help with the removal of invasive species. Buckthorn, multiflora rose and honeysuckle were

removed. Along the pond's edges, this exposed good stands of dogwood, highbush cranberry and arrow-wood that we had not noticed before; now they should be able to thrive. Dena also talked to someone that remembers catching pollywogs in the pond 15



salamanders re-established back into the park. We will be busy for years. On page 5, there is a list of those individuals and organizations that helped to restore Dragonfly Pond.

I hope that in a few years we can have small children come to the pond to learn



Tenhave Vernal Pond in mid November, 2005.

years ago. I had known the pond's condition in the 1970's, but did not realize it was still productive around 1990. It will be very interesting to see what aquatic sun loving plants are still within the seed base. We will be watching closely next spring to see plants that have remained hidden for years, reappear. We are planning pond life programs for next spring as well as research and documenting what plants and animals will return. There have been thoughts on trying to get

about the incredible life found there. We hope the pond life will return in abundant quantity to allow children go home with a small jar of pollywogs. Maybe this will be the spark that starts a child's life-long fascination with the aquatic natural world, as the catching of that crawfish with my father did with me. Come out and take a look at Dragonfly Pond. It will significantly improve the habitat not only for pond life, but all the inhabitants of Tenhave Woods. ■

Thank you to all of those that gave a helping hand to the Dragonfly Pond Project

Corey Anderson	Laura Harrison	Steve Robins
Jeff Anderson	Paul Hunkele	Allen Saville
Chris Benvenuto	Lew Jacques	Harry Saville
Mark Benvenuto	Elaine C. Kentala	Carol Schaffer
Jared Berkompas	Jack Kerby	Ila Schorberg
Agnes Buhalski	Jimmy Kipps	Leslie Schorberg
Joe Butler	Willy Kipps	Dena Serrato
Bill Buttons	Howard Knorr	Jean Service
Rick Cassidy	Joe Korte	Daniel Showalter
Taylor Cook	Philip Kukulski	Joe Smith
Connie Cost	Judy Lamoreaux	Edythe Sonntag
Helen Cost	John Lang	Keegan Springfield
Helen Coulton	Joan Larson	Jonny Stachowicz
John DeLisle	Leo Long	Ben Standing
Dan Dickenson	Brian Manidok	James Standing
Jim Domanski	Eric Manidok	Andrew Stoll
Don Drife	Evan Manidok	Richard Stoll
Arron Dorn	Gary Marchand	Austin Story-Shaughnessy
Jessica Duhaime	Greg Mitchell	Chuck Svalya
River Esker	Bob Muller	Andrew Swift
Alex Fabrizio	Heather Muller	Nolan Tillis
Christian Fuerst	Walter Muller	Steve Tillis
Howard Gentner	Tony Nolan	Tim Turner
Perry Gentner	David Poduska	Heather Van Den Berg
Dave Goetz	Logan Ray	Muriel Versagi
Ed Goetz	Greg Razzel	Larry Vertel
Oliver Goetz	Dave Reichel	Patrick Vestrand
Greg Greenway	Bill Richardson	Nancy Vickers
James Greenway	Pearl Richardson	Ted Vickers
Dave Hammond	Sandros Rivera-Letcher	Sharon Walker
Kristine Hammond	Colin Roberts	Zachary Wekwert
Gloria Harper	Peggy Robins	Jan Wheelock



On October 22, a work crew consisting of scouts, school children, parents, a professional excavator and volunteers from all walks of life helped out in the clearing of trees and scrub. Their hard work is greatly appreciated.

Ken Wolak	Den 4, Cub Scout Pack 1627
Sue Wolak	Greater Detroit Aquarium Society
Dr. Kevin Zipple	Machine Works
Boy Scout Troop 1601	Mountain Top Tree Service
First Methodist Church	North American Native Fishes
Boy Scout Troop 1610	Association, Michigan Chapter
First Congregational Church	Royal Oak, Parks and Forestry Dept.
Boy Scout Troop 1627 - Whittier	Royal Oak Republican Womens
School	Club
Button's Rent-It	Scout Venture Crew 1716 Troop
Clinton River Watershed Council	(Boys and Girls Club)

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

Current Membership Season: Sept '05-Aug '06

If you would like to become a Royal Oak Nature Society member, please fill out a membership form (page 5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society or give the form and check/cash to a Nature Society board member.

A membership entitles you to have our newsletter, *The Chinquapin*, mailed to you four times a year. The mailing begins with the fall issue and ends with the summer one. Your membership will help to cover the cost of printing and mailing of our newsletter and will also assist in funding educational programs that we provide.

Non-members are still welcome to come to our monthly speaker programs as well as our nature walks. Those programs and walks are, and always will be, free to anyone who enjoys learning about nature.

Donations are tax deductible.

Want to Join The Royal Oak Nature Society?

Please make checks out to:

**CITY OF ROYAL OAK
MEMO: ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY**

Mail completed form and donation check to:

**Royal Oak Nature Society
1708 Northwood Blvd.
Royal Oak, MI 48073**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

1-year membership rates: (Sept-Aug)

Individual/Family: \$5.00

Supporting: \$10 and up

Donations are tax deductible

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us to become actively involved in one or more of our Teams.

Beautification: Tackles tasks as surveying the parks, defining & maintaining a trail system, park clean up & removing invasive species.

Communications: Provides publicity about organizational activities to the general membership & the public. It is also responsible for publishing this newsletter.

Education: Focuses its efforts on education outreach

programs that promote understanding and appreciation of the environment by involving children in our local parks and nature programs.

Program: Coordinates and schedules nature walks & nature oriented speaker programs, develop programs for outside organizations and catalog plants, trees & birds.

Ways & Means: Investigates means of fund raising and grant solicitation & then follows through accordingly.

Board of Directors

President: **Tim Turner** 248-320-4819

Vice President: **John DeLisle** 248-585-9002

Treasurer: **Bob Guymer** 248-399-7042

Beautification & Restoration: **Jack Kerby** 248-879-8010

Communications: **Ted Vickers** 248-549-5366

Education: **Kristine Hammond** 248-577-5171

Program: **Bob Muller** 248-398-0195

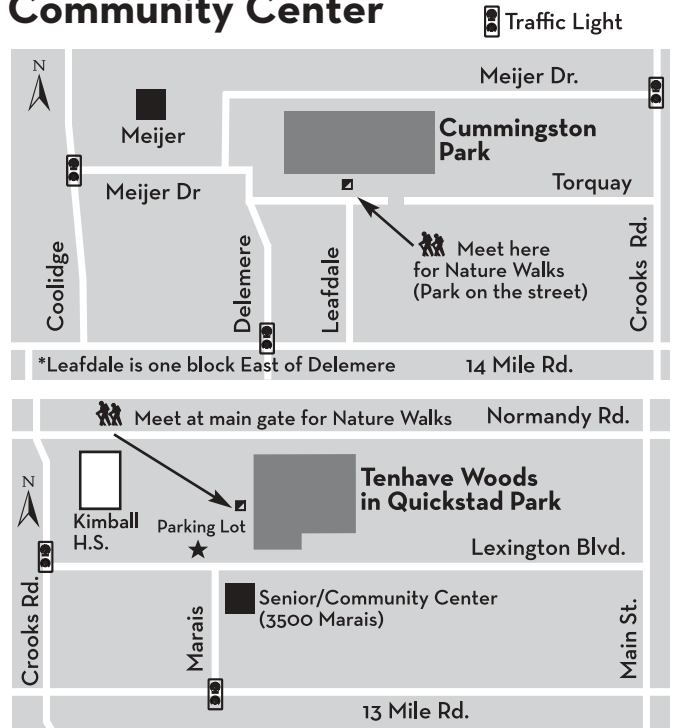
Ways & Means: **Helen Cost** 248-549-9423

Newsletter

Ted Vickers tgvl121@sbcglobal.net

Ann Williams ann.m.williams@comcast.net

Our Nature Parks & Senior Community Center



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummington Park trail maps, please go to our web site (bottom of p.5), link on to **Park Locations** and then **Map for park trail**

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. CAMPBELL ROAD
ROYAL OAK MI 48067

